

Third-generation Civil-military Relations Moving Beyond the Security- Development Nexus

BY FREDERIK ROSÉN

The U.S. elevation of security assistance to a core military capability has divided the waters between those who believe the military should stick to preparing strike capability and fighting wars and those who believe the world needs much broader forms of military engagement. Recent developments in strategy indicate that the latter opinion will prevail. The commencement of U.S. Africa Command (USAFRICOM) in 2007 with its civilian command, interagency modalities, and soft power mandate reflects that an amalgamation of military and civilian capabilities is viewed at the highest levels as the way forward for realizing U.S. foreign policy and national security objectives.

Many of the issues that define USAFRICOM's strategic environment are usually seen as non-military in nature: illegal migration; human, drug, and small arms trafficking; corruption; endemic and pandemic health problems; poverty; oil bunkering; poaching of fisheries; lack of infrastructure; economic underdevelopment; and lack of state capacity. It is therefore believed that a new strategic landscape will mold the future of military work. Reconstruction and stabilization missions will involve an array of noncombat elements, from building and bolstering security institutions for watching over development projects, to humanitarian aid delivery, to disease management.

A similar integrative approach is found in the U.S. Southern Command (USSOUTHCOM) collaborative approach aiming at "integrating all instruments of national capability." In more

Dr. Frederik Rosén teaches in the Department of Political Science at the University of Copenhagen.

acute theaters such as Iraq and in particular Afghanistan, the U.S. military's counterinsurgency campaigns expand military work far into civil governance areas, creating intimate partnerships with nonmilitary agencies. This expansion raises fundamental questions about what military organizations could and should be used for, and how we should understand the emerging "amalgamated" forms of civil-military relations. It raises questions about the military's role in the world and the very notion of "military" affairs.

third-generation civil-military relations involve new challenges in the form of norms, principles, and opinions about what the military should and should not do

By tradition, civil-military relations build on a relatively firm coding of what is military work and what is not. The military is a military organization because it is not the police, justice sector, religious community, or symphonic orchestra. While military organizations may include such elements, they are traditionally defined as subcomponents that help to fight and win wars. As military organizations expand their work into civil governance areas, it is not only the distinction between soldiers and civilians that blurs. It is also the social coding that military and nonmilitary agents use to describe the military organization and its particular ethos and rationality. As a result, it becomes unclear what kind of organization the military is and what it could and should be used for. It becomes difficult to communicate in an exact manner about military affairs. The *semantics* of military affairs become vague. Ambiguous organizational identities may also reduce cooperation because

prospective allies may not know what to expect. This can be seen in Afghan reconstruction, where the U.S. military-led Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan has embarked on a broad range of civil police-building tasks, generating normative and conceptual problems to cooperation. Civilian agencies including the European Union Police Mission in Afghanistan have simply been reluctant to enter a partnership with the American force because it is a military organization, and there is confusion over its actual role. Insofar as the U.S. military increasingly is counting on partnerships with nonmilitary organizations, this blurring of semantics may become an obstacle for pursuing whole-of-government approaches.

This article suggests the notion of "third-generation civil-military relations" to capture the conceptual challenges arising as the U.S. military broadens its missions. Third-generation civil-military relations appear less dramatic than "conventional" civil-military relations because they may not create the same attention-grabbing alignment between military and nonmilitary identities. In addition to the usual difficulties of international cooperation, third-generation civil-military relations involve new challenges in the form of norms, principles, and opinions about what the military should and should not do.

First, I flesh out the concepts of first- and second-generation civil-military relations. This provides a historical/conceptual context for, second, addressing the practice and concept of third-generation civil-military relations. My example of third-generation civil-military relations is the U.S. military-driven Focused District Development (FDD) police reform project in Afghanistan. Third, I discuss how today's third-generation civil-military relations differ from two previous experiences with

U.S. Army (Corey Idleburg)



Afghan National Police participate in urban terrain training, Konar Province

military organizations carrying out civil reform, the U.S. military's Combined Action Program in Vietnam and its post-World War II intervention in Germany. Lastly, I reflect further on how we should understand third-generation civil-military relations and the alteration of the military code in the context of global security.

First- and Second-generation Civil-military Relations

Until the end of the Cold War, the dialogue on civil-military relations was primarily a domestic debate about the military and the soldier's relation to the state. This discussion originally sprang from the paradox of the state setting up an organization that had the capacity to take over the state itself. The main reference texts are Samuel P. Huntington's *The Soldier and the State: The Theory and Politics of Civil-Military Relations* (1957) and Morris Janowitz's *The Professional Soldier: A Social and Political Portrait* (1960). The discussion is ongoing and deals with topics such as the military economy, military technology,¹ military culture and organization,² military-industrial complexes, militarization (of political culture), civilianization/the transfer of traditional military functions to civil service personnel,³ outsourcing, conscription, the military and the media, the relationships between military and civilian leadership,⁴ military transformation in postconflict countries, and others.

In due course, a comprehensive academic and political discourse has developed around the various ways in which military organizations interface and interact with other societal systems.

On the one hand, then, a fairly well-developed codification of the military system has been established. On the other hand, it is becoming increasingly difficult to distinguish the military system from society at large, according to the literature. Discussion of the relationship among the military, state, economy, and society, however, mostly focuses on the military organization's domestic associations. As military organizations leave for missions, their identities as a distinct branch with a particular form of mission have until recently remained relatively stable in the political discourse.

During the 1990s, however, a new discussion on civil-military relations was kicked off by international peacekeeping operations. In the context of complex humanitarian emergencies, armed forces were assigned roles in which they worked close to or even directly alongside civilians, with the result that the line between the soldier and the civilian became "blurred." The discussion surrounding the role of these "Blue Helmets" centered around three primary issues. First was the change to the military ethos that stemmed from allocating warriors to low-intensity peacekeeping missions under

forces created an inherent tension between national and transnational belonging among peacekeeping troops that fueled the discussion of the changing role of the military in global security.⁶ Second, the Blue Helmets discussion was (and still is) occupied with the vast tactical and operational problems involved in coordinating work between military and nonmilitary organizations in multinational, cross-agency peacekeeping setups. This was the context out of which the civil-military cooperation concept emerged in an attempt to institutionalize the interface between civil and military actors in peace support operations. In particular, communication and intelligence were (and remain) key issues in this connection along with how differing opinions on goals and means hamper communication and cooperation. However, the aspect of the Blue Helmets discussion that attracted the most political attention was the transformation of the humanitarian space that it involved and the impact of this development on the neutrality of civilians and aid workers. The distinction between participants and non-participants had already turned delicate owing to the fragmented nature of conflict in the post-Cold War era. Integrated peacekeeping missions only added to the confusion. Little by little, the neutrality of humanitarian organizations was eroded, and 10 years into the new millennium most humanitarian organizations and national and international nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) report severe difficulties with regard to work in conflict zones.

More recently, civil-military relations—along with discussion of them—entered a new stage as the international presence in Iraq and Afghanistan began to merge military and civil capabilities into the much-discussed Provincial Reconstruction Teams (PRTs). These teams combine both civilian and military elements,

10 years into the new millennium most humanitarian organizations and national and international nongovernmental organizations report severe difficulties with regard to work in conflict zones

the umbrella of "some weak and confused international organization upholding abstract humanitarian values"⁵ rather than deploying soldiers in unambiguous missions to protect the motherland in heroic and spectacular battles. The formation of multinational peacekeeping

the former typically political advisors and development experts, and the latter mandated to provide security cover for reconstruction and local government. PRTs differ widely in terms of size, concept, policy, armament, and proximity to and acceptance by local populations and their political leaders.⁷ A major challenge for the PRT setup has been how to coordinate activities between the PRTs and other development actors and navigate in a conflict theater where even the slightest connection between coalition forces and civilians or NGOs may expose the latter to Taliban violence. This involves tactical and operational problems related to participation, neutrality, cooperation, and alignment of activities. However, it has also been widely discussed whether military forces should have any role at all in development work, and whether PRT development projects, aimed at winning hearts and minds, treat development as a means to another end. What the military should and should not do—in other words, the limits of military engagement—is a crucial question in the PRT debate. Commentators argue that a deeper merging of civil and military objectives and capabilities has taken place, yet evidence from the ground informs us that the sophisticated wordings of academics and policymakers (such as concerted action, integrated approach, “3D,” holistic approach, security-development nexus) seldom find their way into the concrete conduct of civil-military relations. Instead, we observe a number of military-led, military-supported, or in some instances joint military-NGO “quick impact” projects carried out in quite unrefined ways, where the military’s proximity to local communities or NGOs is often an unbalanced and highly sensitive issue. Despite the PRT concept’s tactical difficulties, it is believed to hold great promise if just nuts and bolts are adjusted.

The discussions of the friction between military and nonmilitary organizations and the difficulties of repeatedly aligning action refer to the difference between military and nonmilitary modes of operation as the root of the problem. The distinction between the military and non-military remains the defining code for how each group of actors views the other.

The Blue Helmets and PRT concept can be classified, respectively, as first- and second-generation civil-military relations. Both types belong to the international domain and are thus not related to the domestic puzzle concerning the soldier and the state. Common to the two sets of civil-military relations, along with discussions of them, is the employment of an idea of a relatively strict separation between military and nonmilitary forms of organization and action, which nevertheless can be aligned closely in joint action. Both first- and second-generation civil-military relations and discussions of them are characterized by operating “civil” and “military” as conceptually distinct governance areas.

Another new feature of civil-military relations in peace support operations worth noting here is the militarization of law enforcement. Bosnia and Herzegovina provide a good example in this context,⁸ but the tendency can also be observed in Iraq and Afghanistan. Mostly it consists of a combination of direct support or training/supervision of law enforcement units, as well as foreign military personnel carrying out their own operations to address issues such as organized crime, smuggling and trafficking, terrorism, and potentially violent demonstrators.⁹ Some of this new “soldiering” is most properly understood as a product of a global security situation in which traditional distinctions between internal and external security and the police and the military have become obsolete.

On the other hand, the training and supervision aspects, as components of international relations, can be understood as a continuation of military aid and support for territorial control as those developed during the Cold War. However, even if the militarization of law enforcement has turned soldiers into police officers, such law enforcement has until recently mostly been conducted along a strict divide between military and nonmilitary actors, which is why I suggest classifying these activities under the heading of second-generation civil-military relations. On the other hand, military involvement in security sector reform has recently expanded far beyond the sorts of relations that are described as militarized law enforcement.

differentiation among governance sectors is the condition that permits the coupling, intertwining, and formalizing of dependency relationships among state institutions

What's New in Civil-military Relations?

The era when military force was a distinct component in wars and peacekeeping is over, and it is now possible to observe new-fangled forms of civil-military relations. The example I draw on, further unpacked below, is a U.S. military-driven civil police reform program in Afghanistan, the Focused District Development. This program not only provides the Afghan National Police training and mentoring along with new equipment and facilities, but also aims to reform the civil governance functions that nest the police, including the justice sector, Ministry of the Interior, and provincial and district governance. As

the police reform program has progressed, the U.S. military's Combined Security Transition Command-Afghanistan (CSTC-A), which is running the program, is building up capability with regard to reforming and governing civil governance branches. This includes increased know-how in relation to civil reform projects, improved capability to manage partnerships with civil state branches, and better contracting practices. Below, I outline some major tenets of the FDD used as an example in discussion of the concept of third-generation civil-military relations and how such relations differ from their first- and second-generation counterparts. I am primarily interested in the conceptual dimension of the FDD because I must admit that it is not entirely clear what kinds of successes it has accomplished on the ground.

Security Sector Reform and the Military in Afghanistan

The fundamental lesson learned in Afghanistan police reform is that a police force cannot exist on its own. It requires a bureaucratic capacity to manage payrolls, other financial matters, and political and economic affairs in general, just as it needs political-legal structures to guarantee accountability and due legal process in the investigation and prosecution of crime. Functional differentiation of the state—differentiation among governance sectors, including the tripartition of state powers into the legislative, judicial, and executive branches—is the condition that permits the coupling, intertwining, and formalizing of dependency relationships among state institutions. Conversely, the tripartition of powers can only work if the general bureaucracy is capable of putting into concrete governance practice the distinction among the branches. Many argue that we do not need a European constitutional state in Afghanistan, but some

elements have to be in place for a police force to function. The idea that security must be achieved before “the rest” of the state can grow, which until recently dominated security sector reform, misrepresents the concept of security by detaching it from the area of state bureaucracy. Today, there is general agreement that any successful reform of the Afghan National Police ultimately depends on reform of Afghanistan’s Ministry of the Interior. Yet the general donor commitment to police reform remains weak.

It was within this context, including a weak donor commitment to police reform, that the U.S. military initiated the FDD, which today is run out of Camp Eggers in Kabul. The original FDD concept paper fleshed out an ambitious program for the U.S. military’s engagement in civil governance affairs in Afghanistan.¹⁰ This document was explicit about the failure of previous approaches to police reform, and it accommodated a range of recommendations found in critical reports. For a military project, the FDD had a surprisingly holistic design that rethought ordinary security sector reform elements, such as the “police” and “justice sector,” seeking to intertwine these with broader development objectives as integrated parts rather than as separate areas for reform. The FDD extended the ambitions and functions of the military organization far beyond conventional military goals and professional capacity into all sorts of tasks essential for engineering civil governance.

Overall the FDD concept has four distinct and innovative features: its district focus, emphasis on mentoring and collective training, integrated approach, and “buy-in design.”

District Focus. The FDD breaks down the geographical reform areas to district levels and pursues a bottom-up approach in which reform is tailored individually for each district.

This differs significantly from the Kabul-centered reform programs that had dominated governance reform at large in Afghanistan. Subnational governance reform was not seriously put on the agenda before 2005,¹¹ and the FDD concept can perhaps be seen as a leg of that development. The novelty of turning to a bottom-up focus on the district—the place where central government and, not least, policing are (or at least should be) felt—should thus also be seen in the light of local governance being a surprisingly neglected area in the state-building literature.¹² In terms of civil-military

the FDD targets the esprit de corps and ethos of police work to emancipate individual police officers from local patronage structures

relations, this approach broadens the military contact face to local governance structures and political authorities. A wide range of nonmilitary actors has been involved in the assessment of the districts, including Afghan deputies, United Nations (UN), and European Union Police Mission in Afghanistan (EUPOL).

Mentoring and Collective Training. The use of collective training and a view of the police more as cooperative units than as separate individuals constitute a new approach to police training in Afghanistan, marking a break from the previous approach under which thousands of individually trained police officers were fanned out by U.S.-led police training centers. The FDD is a military-driven police-mentoring program. It represents a move toward a greater focus on the reform of the informal social structures that govern local police cooperation. It targets the esprit de corps and ethos of police work to emancipate individual police officers

U.S. Air Force (Samuel Bendet)



Kenya's army color guard posts colors for arrival of U.S. Army General William E. Ward, Commander, U.S. Africa Command

from local patronage structures. It aims at shaping personalities. The FDD thus represents a move from a technocratic approach toward the social engineering of police culture and individual behavior. To create a structure for thinking about and organizing police ranks and career development within the police force, CSTC–A, in cooperation with Afghanistan's Ministry of the Interior and EUPOL, develops social technologies in the form of matrices for rank reform, which will also support the development of identity and selfhood within police ranks.

Integrated Approach. The objective of the FDD is to create better internal organization at the district level by enhancing skills for police cooperation, and to facilitate cooperation among the district, regional, provincial, and national levels. The FDD aims to clarify authority structures and to improve reporting and communication between the district's units and Ministry of the Interior. This includes the adjustment and legal regulation of authority lines at all levels in compliance with national legal templates for police work. To accomplish these goals, the FDD has pushed judicial reform and promoted development projects and public information campaigns at the district level to buttress police legitimacy. A key player is DynCorp International, which provides mentors and advisors, security, communication, and base life support to the FDD. The contractual relationship to DynCorp has shifted, but funding has come from the Department of Defense and the operational command responsibility of DynCorp has remained under CSTC–A. Conceptually challenging “civil-military relations” can be observed in the relations among CSTC–A, the U.S. State Department, DynCorp, the Afghan Ministry of the Interior, and the other actors engaged in police and justice

sector reform, including the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan and EUPOL.

Furthermore, the FDD is promoting civil-military partnerships not only among the U.S. military and branches of Afghan governance, but also among the U.S. military and international community, EU, donors, and other actors with interests in security sector reform. The FDD program's insistence on the importance of cooperation with civil agencies makes it possible to view the FDD as a military-driven platform for international cooperation on civil governance reform in Afghanistan. The pursuit of third-generation civil-military relations makes the FDD a new form for cooperation in Afghan reconstruction, where international cooperation so far has built on a distinct separation of military and nonmilitary affairs.

Buy-in Design. Competing donor visions and the reluctance of donors to intervene in each other's business are a major problem in Afghanistan's reconstruction. To avoid the "too many cooks" syndrome and ensure a comprehensive and broadly informed process that funnels the multiple national and international voices into a single approach before concrete action is taken, the FDD concept provides an outline of a long list of actors who are involved—or at least invited to participate—in the shaping of that concept. For instance, the District Assessment Reconstruction Teams, the units that evaluate districts and adjust the FDD in accordance with local needs, are in principle open to anyone, and donors, NGOs, and the UN have been invited to participate. To be sure, the FDD invited more than a dovetailing of action, as was the idea with the PRTs. It suggests setting up much more intimate partnerships in which ambitions, leadership, and activities of military and nonmilitary agencies merge. In fact, the buy-in concept of the FDD not only opens up the program to

numerous actors, but also presents FDD success as depending on the buy-ins. Of course, the challenges are vast and the pitfalls numerous, but the FDD nonetheless moves ahead with an institutional legacy that is different from that of any other military project.

The FDD program has developed since the research for this article was carried out, yet the main conceptual tenets of the program as outlined above remain. As of winter 2008–2009, the Focused District Development Program was presented as "a Ministry of the Interior program to reform the Afghan Uniformed Police, a component of the [Afghan National Police], which simultaneously achieves improvements in local governance, public works, and elements of the Rule of Law."¹³ To be sure, the rehutting of the FDD—which, owing to the extremely low capabilities of the Afghan government, must be considered somewhat pro forma—sets a new conceptual agenda for understanding the FDD in the reconstruction context. The close mentoring of Afghan Ministry of the Interior deputies and police officers makes it difficult to observe the difference between the U.S. military and the ministry, including in relation to policies flowing from the ministry. In addition, the close cooperation among CSTC-A, the NATO-led International Security Assistance Force, and donors and international agencies such as the UN and EUPOL makes it difficult to mark out authority and decisionmaking power. This setup could be discussed much further if viewed from the historical perspectives of foreign administrations and empires. Here, we shall make do with noting how the FDD program started a process that has led to a form of civil-military relations that has not been seen before, at least during the period in which the nature of civil-military relations has been discussed within academic and political circles.

What can be observed is a joining of military and civil ambitions and work areas that goes further than what was seen in the approaches of the Blue Helmets and PRTs. It goes further than the military simply providing security for civil development projects and local governance, the embedding of civil advisors in military units, the partly civil leadership of military units (the PRT concept), or building and managing partnerships between military organizations and civilian agents. Rather, the relations promoted by and through the FDD are not about alignment, cooperation, and proximity,

any notion of victory is dependent on a stabilized Afghan security sector

but about amalgamation, merging, and overlapping organizational structures. Altogether, this suggests that the U.S. military's development of civil capability and the cooperation of various civil agencies with the U.S. military—including the UN, EUPOL, donors, and the Afghan Ministry of the Interior—should be regarded as a new form of civil-military relations.

One might argue that it may be going too far to view the relatively small FDD project as an indicator of a major change in the U.S. military. On the other hand, the FDD is a spearhead component of U.S. strategy in Afghanistan. Any notion of victory is dependent on a stabilized Afghan security sector. As African security policy expert Sean McFate asserts about USAFRICOM, “Transition/stability operations may eclipse combat operations when it comes to determining ‘victory.’ The situation in Iraq and Afghanistan has made it patently clear that lethal force is no longer the decisive variable in military campaigns.”¹⁴ If this is true, kinetic force may become merely the shelter

for the core military tasks of stabilization and development. In a 2008 *Foreign Affairs* article, Condoleezza Rice called the PRT “a model of civil-military relations for the future.”¹⁵ But it seems as if the FDD model may provide a better glimpse of the future of civil-military relations than the second-generation civil-military relations of the PRTs.

Third-generation Civil-military Relations

The FDD program merged civil and military affairs beyond the conventional military/nonmilitary distinction, which until now has provided the conceptual template for constructing the role of the military in world affairs. I suggest looking at these innovations in civil-military relations as third-generation civil-military relations. This concept aims to grasp the more deep-seated amalgamation of military and civilian capabilities that can be observed in the U.S. military's stabilization ambitions and practices, not least USAFRICOM.

A defining feature of third-generation civil-military relations is that the difference between military and civil work areas has vanished. This could also be described as the vanishing of the functional differentiation between military and other tools of international politics. This differentiation contrasts with first- and second-generation civil-military relations, which generated perceptions of a clash between “military” and “nonmilitary” that sustained the conceptual distinction between the two areas of governance. Third-generation civil-military relations do not involve the same sort of directly observable harm to the humanitarian space as those of the first two generations. They appear less dramatic and therefore have not aroused the same attention.

Objections to the U.S. military's expansion of work areas are mostly based on normative

claims about what the military should and should not do. This normative disagreement is also visible in the politics of cooperation on projects pursuing third-generation civil-military relations. The dilemma in respect of Afghanistan National Police reform is manifest because there really is only one option in that context, and that is the FDD. Development agencies, international organizations, and NGOs must decide whether they want to build partnerships with the U.S. military on civil governance issues. Decisions not to will inevitably have some negative impact on improving the functions of the police. To engage in cooperation involves serious practical problems due to the huge differences in organizational cultures, budgets, and manpower, and will also imply trespassing on time-honored distinctions between areas of governance. Hence cooperation between EUPOL and CSTC-A has been disadvantaged by indecisiveness in Brussels, as well as by differences in organizational ethos and rationalities. Personal aversions stemming from bad relationships between the German leadership of EUPOL and the U.S. military leadership apparently also played a role in the early FDD days. To be sure, the attitudes and sentiments of people in leadership positions are highly relevant to understanding the complexities of cooperation in missions such as those being conducted in Afghanistan. But the normative problem of the limitations on military engagement—that is, the question of what the military should and should not do—also hampers cooperation. In many European countries, a simple reference to American militarism can justify nonengagement in the FDD. Of course, the military can be trained and used for any kind of task. Limitations on military functions are based purely on normative assumptions about the military's role in national,

international, and global affairs. That said, there are many tasks for which current military organizations are really not suited because of a lack of organizational capability. This, however, is a practical matter, not one about norms.

Similar Experiences from History

An example that is often mentioned in connection with civil-military relationships in Iraq and Afghanistan is the U.S. Marine Corps Combined Action Program (CAP) in Vietnam in the period 1965–1971. The main tenet of this program was to send units into the South Vietnamese hinterlands to stay in villages. The CAP attempted to insulate the people of select villages from the ravages of the war by winning the hearts and minds of the occupants and training local militia groups.¹⁶ There was no attempt to establish a state bureaucracy, a judiciary, or

the U.S. Marine Corps Combined Action Program attempted to insulate the people of select villages by winning the hearts and minds of the occupants and training local militia groups

criminal investigations. There was no idea of state police, nor was the CAP a joint international program. It was different from the FDD focus on police ethos and professionalism, although the seeds of embedded mentoring were present.

Another relevant program was the Civil Operations and Revolutionary Development Support (CORDS) program, which brought together advisors from the military and the civilian U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) to work with their Vietnamese counterparts,¹⁷ somewhat resembling what can be observed in the PRTs. While in some ways reminiscent of the CAP and

CORDS, however, the FDD is a much more “modern” and institutionalized project. Also, while CORDS pursued what I call third-generation civil-military relations, the challenges posed by such relations to the broader international establishment had not materialized before the FDD in Afghanistan.

An example of the military moving into civil governance can be found in Germany after World War II, where the U.S. military reorganized the German political system with the objective of an “eventual reconstruction of German political life on a democratic basis.”¹⁸ This experience, however, should be thought of as military governance, similar to the Bremer period in Iraq or earlier U.S. experiences in Mexico in 1847–1848; in the Confederate states during and after the American Civil War; in the Philippines, Porto (Puerto) Rico, and Cuba after the Spanish-American War; and in the German Rhineland after World War I. In each

functional differentiation and reduced complexity allow for the creation of new complexity within the organization

instance, neither the army nor the government accepted civil governance as a legitimate military function. My conclusion is that even if elements of the FDD model can be found in other current and historical examples, the FDD and the Afghan context provide a genuine example for observing the conceptual challenge of third-generation civil-military relations.

Third-generation Civil-military Relations as a Second-order Problem

The challenges posed by third-generation civil-military relations are more abstract than

those posed by their first- and second-generation counterparts. The challenges from third-generation civil-military relations are not only about changes in the social organization of people, organizations, institutions, or other materially observable social phenomena with institutional boundaries; they are also located on the level of communication, where the very notion of the military is produced, the level that makes it possible to conceptualize the military as a distinct social organization within the broader social organization we call society.

I suggest that the modern social code of the military system is the readiness to deliver adequate coercive force at the right place at the right time. This particular coding is constructed by three binary codes: adequate/inadequate, timely/untimely, and coercion/noncoercion. In just war theory, the first two codes are treated as the principles of proportionality and of necessity. The code of coercion is less philosophical and concerns the organized means of violent force, along with the state’s monopoly on such violence. The code of coercion/noncoercion is the semantic code that defines the military as a state branch that communicates about coercion: coercion/noncoercion is the general code that encases all forms of military activity. It transcends the military organization by giving every little part of the military machinery a certain spin toward delivering coercive force. Even military-driven “nonmilitary” activities such as children’s schools and health care, which are integrated parts of the U.S. military project, are all included in the military branch, because their purpose is to deliver adequate coercive force at the right place at the right time.

The military system is defined by and observed through its difference from, but attachment to, other core societal institutions, such as law, politics, economics, and religion.

Hence, with its particular semantic code, the military code defines the military organization's virtual place in society. Its code is central both to the military's self-description and society's description of the military, as well as to the ways in which military identity and functions are conceptualized. It is the semantic code by and through which the military organization is observed from within and without. The academic literature speaks about a juridification of society, where communication about all kinds of matters increasingly invokes the legal code of lawful/unlawful rather than morality's code of good and bad, or the political code of more or less power. Similarly, one can think of the currently much-debated militarization of society as a process of recoding societal communication. In fact, one can view militarization as the answer to securitization as the political practice of creating a societal ethos that is focused on a given society's own survival.

Militarization is a turn in the semantic coding of societal activities that changes people's understanding of what they are doing and why. Coding social activities along the military code funnels them into a certain social system where the ultimate reference of communication is delivering adequate coercive force at the right place at the right time. This is not the place to further unpack the interrelated social phenomena of securitization and militarization, which here shall serve merely as an example of what is at stake when we talk about the military code. My point is that the military organization creates and recreates itself by reference to this general code, which separates it from other societal organizations and thereby reduces complexity. The military becomes so simple an organization because it has one overall goal. At the same time, however, this functional differentiation and reduced complexity

allow for the creation of new complexity within the organization.

The fact is that the modern state bureaucracy and market functions rely on a particular "modern" semantic coding that separates society's different activities. It is an abstract "society's society" that provides the template for building and managing institutions from the courthouse to the stock exchange. The modern welfare state's highly complex organization would not be possible without the possibility of thinking in social systems. Except for the practical difficulties of cooperation, the challenges from third-generation civil-military relations are not only about the particular place of the military in society and global security at large, but also about how this place is constituted as a communicative system. The evolution of the military system as a social subsystem that presupposed the functions of other subsystems has been under way for centuries, being fine-tuned during the latter part of the 20th century.

As the military starts merging ambitions and functions with other organizations, the semantic codes become confused. Now the military is not only about strike capability, but also about policing, state-building, disaster management, health care, development, and diplomacy. The consequences of such mission expansion are the subject of intense debate. From the point of view of partner organizations, the expansion of military work areas means less clarity about what kind of organization one is cooperating with. In Afghanistan, this means that it is the same organization that both mentors civil servants in the Ministry of the Interior and carries out airstrikes. This uncertainty can be described as a semantic uncertainty about the coding of the military organization, which creates new complexity in questions of cooperation. One of the reasons concepts such as militarized law

enforcement, military peacekeeping, militarized humanitarian aid delivery, and military governance have a certain iconoclastic ring is because they blend semantic codes that usually separate and organize societal activities within the society we identify as “the good society.” One is tempted to diagnose third-generation civil-military relations as a reversion of the modern Weberian state’s functional separation of bureaucratic domains.

When the International Crisis Group reports that “the U.S. decision to give a leading role in its police programs to the Department of Defense has further blurred the distinction between the military and police,”¹⁹ it demonstrates a certain coding of the military system that organizes communication and creates order. Academic and political discussions of civil-military relations largely take for granted the ability to communicate effectively on what is “truly” or “traditionally” military and what is not. They take for granted that there is such a thing as a genuine military task, and this perspective dominates our observations and analysis of civil-military relations. It would not be going too far to say that the literature on civil-military relations generally omits the question of what we are actually talking about with civil-military relations.

My point is that first- and second-generation civil-military relations, along with discussions of them, not only created the perception of a clash between military and nonmilitary agency but also sustained the semantic coding of the military organization. The discourse on alignment, cooperation, proximity, and “integrated approaches” relied on a conventional coding of the military: indeed, the literature on holistic or integrated approaches to peacekeeping and state-building very much relies on this distinction. There is a consensus

about “what is getting blurred.” The attempts to make sense of the conceptual merging by calling them “hybrids”—the hybrid peacekeeping force, the hybrid soldier, or hybrid civil-military relations—suggest a hybrid *between* civil and military.²⁰ It presupposes a separation. We can in that way view the general discussions of civil-military relations as communication about the interface or distinction between the civil and the military. And we can observe how this literature, by and large, functions as a sort of truth-producing machine that keeps bringing into being a certain semantic code or truth about the military. To understand how the challenges from third-generation civil-military relations also involve a semantic disorder vis-à-vis the modern state project, we have to turn our focus away from the organization or institution as the primary unit of analysis. We need instead to focus on communication and its semantics as a medium for societal organization. In the end, communication is the only social experience. The societal significance that is attributed to any situation will depend on how it is communicated.

My point is not that a second-order perspective on these issues will solve the problems. Nor do I think that merging civil and military agencies is necessarily preferable. My point is that the military’s whole-of-government approaches as we see in Afghanistan, USAFRICOM, and USSOUTHCOM and their pursuing of third-generation civil-military relations may lead to a more profound change in the military code that defines the function of the military organization in the world. This change may add to or augment more conventional problems of cooperation. A deeper understanding of the problems that stem from third-generation civil-military relations may enable the United States to grasp

some of the complexity involved and thus be more clear about what is at stake when military organizations embark on civil governance areas and create, together with their civil counterparts, higher level partnerships between military and civil agencies. I am sure that if a profound amalgamation of military and civilian capabilities continues to be viewed as the way forward for realizing U.S. foreign policy and national security objectives, the third-generation civil-military relations will become a critical concept. **PRISM**

Notes

¹ Martin van Creveld, *The Transformation of War: The Most Radical Reinterpretation of Armed Conflict Since Clausewitz* (New York: Free Press, 1991).

² Edward N. Luttwak, "From Vietnam to Desert Fox: Civil-Military Relations in Modern Democracies," *Survival* 41, no. 1 (January 1999), 99–112.

³ Peter C. Kasurak, "Civilianization and the Military Ethos: Civil-Military Relations in Canada," *Canadian Public Administration* 25, no. 1 (2008), 108–129.

⁴ Richard H. Kohn, "Out of Control: The Crisis in Civil-Military Relations," *The National Interest* 35 (1994), 3–17.

⁵ Bernard Boëne, "France as Peacekeeper in Bosnia-Herzegovina," in *Warriors in Peacekeeping: Points of Tension in Complex Cultural Encounters*, ed. Jean Callaghan and Mathias Schönborn (Berlin: LIT Verlag Berlin-Hamburg-Münster, 2004), 210.

⁶ Eyal Ben-Ari and Efrat Elron, "Blue Helmets and White Armor: Multi-Nationalism and Multi-Culturalism Among UN Peacekeeping Forces," *City and Society* 13, no. 2 (2001), 271–302.

⁷ Nima Abbaszadeh et al., *Provincial Reconstruction Teams: Lessons and Recommendations* (Princeton, NJ: Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, 2008).

⁸ Cornelius Prisendorf and Susa E. Penksa, "Militarized Law Enforcement in Peace Operations: EUFOR in Bosnia and Herzegovina," *International Peacekeeping* 15, no. 5 (2008), 677–694.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 679.

¹⁰ Combined Security Transition Command–Afghanistan (CSTC–A), "Enhancing the Capabilities of the Afghan National Police: A Focused District Development (FDD) Strategy," unpublished FDD Concept Paper, 2007.

¹¹ Sarah Lister, "Understanding State-Building and Local Government in Afghanistan," Crisis States Research Centre Working Paper no. 14 (London: Development Studies Institute, 2007), 12.

¹² *Ibid.*; Anne Evans and Yasin Osmani, "Assessing Progress: Update Report on Subnational Administration in Afghanistan," Afghan Research and Evaluation Unit, June 2005.

¹³ CSTC–A, *The Enduring Ledger* (newsletter), January 2009, 13, available at <www.cstc-a.com/News/enduring%20ledgers/2009endledger/January2009EL.pdf>.

¹⁴ Sean McFate, "U.S. Africa Command: A New Strategic Paradigm?" *Military Review* 17 (January–February 2008).

¹⁵ Condoleezza Rice, "Rethinking the National Interest: American Realism for a New World," *Foreign Affairs* (July–August 2008).

¹⁶ Michael E. Peterson, *The Combined Action Platoons: The U.S. Marines' Other War in Vietnam* (New York: Praeger, 1989).

¹⁷ Robert Cassidi, "The Long Small War: Indigenous Forces for Counterinsurgency," *Parameters* 36 (Summer 2006), 55.

¹⁸ James Dobbins et al., *America's Role in Nation-Building: From Germany to Iraq* (Santa Monica, CA: RAND, 2003), 21–38.

¹⁹ International Crisis Group (ICG), "Reforming Afghanistan's Police," Asia Report 138 (Kabul and Brussels: ICG, 2007), i.

²⁰ Karl Haltiner and Gerhard Kümmel, "The Hybrid Soldier: Identity Changes in the Military," in *Armed Forces, Soldiers and Civil-Military Relations: Essays in Honor of Jürgen Kuhlmann*, ed. Gerhard Kümmel (Wiesbaden: VS Verlag für Sozialwissenschaften, 2009), 75–82.